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Jan.27, 2006

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## Learn to Graft Fruit Trees in Free Workshop at Cal Poly Feb. 18

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Area residents are invited to learn about and practice techniques of tree grafting at the next gathering of the Central Coast chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers Saturday, Feb. 18, at Cal Poly.

The organization's 10th annual grafting party and scion exchange will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the Crops Unit on campus, just off Highland and Mt. Bishop drives.

The public is invited to attend the free grafting lessons, demonstrations and practice sessions. Rootstock for apples, plums, peaches, nectarines, pears, almonds and apricots will be available at \$2 per root. No experience is necessary, and it can be fun, said event organizer and retired Cal Poly agriculture Professor Joe Sabol.

The free scion exchange will offer more than 150 different deciduous fruit tree prunings, which can be grafted to a tree root or tree at home. Grafting knives, budding tape, and bird net will also be for sale at the event, and Cal Poly students will be on hand to sell citrus and deciduous fruit trees.

Organizers will demonstrate how and when to graft prunings, and offer tips. Grafting is the process of joining two separate plants: the base, or rootstock, and the top, called the scion, said Art DeKleine, co-chairman of the Central Coast Chapter of California Rare Fruit Growers.

"Grafting has acquired an undeserved mystique," DeKleine said. "Once you learn the basic principles and acquire a little practice, you should be able to graft successfully -- and be known by friends and neighbors as 'a good grafter!'"

In addition to the free on-campus workshop, each spring the chapter partners with Cal Poly's College of Agriculture and the Cal Poly Ag Ambassadors to offer grafting workshops at local high schools. CRFG members, along with Cal Poly Ag Ambassadors, take the rootstocks to the schools and show the students how to graft.

For directions to the Crops Unit at Cal Poly, please see the Chapter's Web site at [www.crfg-central.org](http://www.crfg-central.org).

For additional information, or to set up a high school class grafting demonstration, contact DeKleine at 543-9455 or Joe Sabol at 544-1056.

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